

# Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory

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## Abstract

The present study aims to explore and explain the collapse of Pahlavi II using the destabilizing state theory. The reasons for the collapse of the said government have been analyzed based on historical documents and the destabilizing state theory. The paper portrays the subject by scrutinizing historical reasons and evidence found in credible sources. The fundamental issue is the identification of factors and explaining their role in the collapse. The indicators of the destabilizing state theory have been used to examine and explain various historical data. This research, based on library sources, memoirs, documents, and newspapers, and a descriptive-analytical qualitative method, aims to answer the question of 'Which variables involved in the collapse of the Pahlavi II government are based on the destabilizing state theory and why did the Pahlavi government collapse?' The results indicated that the variables involved in the collapse of the Pahlavi regime include: Legitimacy crisis, inefficiency in providing public services, law evasion accompanied by violence, coercion and suppression, infiltration of the SAVAK security forces, foreign interventions, especially by the United States, demographic pressure, migration from villages to cities and particularly to Tehran, superiority and decisiveness of revolutionary forces, undeveloped economic structure, rapid and erratic economic growth, and financial corruption.

**Keywords:** Collapse, Pahlavi II Government, Destabilizing State, Legitimacy Crisis, American Intervention, Financial Corruption.

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### Introduction

The Pahlavi political system emerged in a contemporary period of Iranian history in which the country was transitioning from a traditional system to a form of conditional and modern political system. The Pahlavi government, especially Pahlavi II, perceived its political system as the inheritor of an ancient regime, with a long history of despotism dating back 2500 years.

This idea and mindset existed in the mind of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was the sole source and decision maker of the Shah. The Shah had complete authority in all political and social matters. The Pahlavi government had spent more than half a century in the conditional system, but there was no sign of law and public participation in the despotic system that had a long history. The most crucial era of this government in terms of despotism and autarchy dates back to post-Mordad 28, 1332 SH.

The first 12 years of Pahlavi II's era were a period of trial and error. During that time, the Shah lacked the maturity, power, and sufficient experience to wield power and force. In the first 12 years, regarding the weakness of the Shah's power, the rotation and distribution of political power among the three institutions of the "Parliament," the "Court," and the "Cabinets" took place. After the coup on Mordad 28, 1332, a concentration of power was created, and the Shah had oversight over all resources and centers of power, bringing them under his control.

The formation of the Islamic movement under the leadership of Imam Khomeini and the victory of the Islamic Revolution, on the one hand, as a result of the inefficiency of the Pahlavi regime's structure, and on the other hand, and more importantly, considering the presence of divine leadership in the nature of the movement, the collapse of the Pahlavi regime and forming the Islamic Revolution have been examined by domestic and foreign researchers with different perspectives, and despite extensive and varied effects in this regard, it is still possible to re-examine and explain the reasons for the collapse of Pahlavi from a new perspective and with a different lens.

The core of this paper has delved into examining and explaining the subject using the destabilizing state theory and the pivotal role of the discourse of the Islamic Revolution (cultural-religious). The present study aims to reinforce and elucidate the issue as a research problem, exploring the relationship between state disruption and the collapse of the Pahlavi regime in 1357. Despite the Shah's significant power for suppression and increased oil revenues due to rising global oil prices, the existence of a strong external supporter (the United States) in support of the Shah led to the downfall of the Pahlavi government. Why? The reason lies in the crisis

of legitimacy and the regime's power failure, the lack of a strong political will to govern the country, and societal poverty. The hypothesis of this article is based on the premise that public dissatisfaction, the nature of state disruption, the prominent role of revolutionary leadership, and the cultural-religious nature of the Islamic movement were all factors contributing to the fall of the Pahlavi regime.

The research aim is to identify and explain the role of variables involved in the collapse of the Pahlavi government. The importance lies in understanding Iran's political, social, and economic structures and the role of the people in legitimizing or delegitimizing the political system. The main question is 'What were the most significant variables involved in the collapse of the Pahlavi II government and how did they play a role in the decline of the Pahlavi dynasty?'

To this end, the destabilizing state theory is used to explain the influential factors and delve into key indicators in the destabilizing state. The article posits that the Pahlavi II government was a destabilizing state and despite having resources, power, international support, and dominance over political, social, and system-related affairs, it was incapable of preventing disintegration and maintaining governance. Regarding the state's instability and underlying weaknesses examined in the article, the government collapsed. The research methodology in this article is fundamentally historical and qualitative-based, described analytically and in an explanatory and causal manner. Data collection was conducted from historical sources and library materials.

### **1. Research Background**

Some works that have investigated the collapse of the Pahlavi regime include:

- Abolfazl Eskandari Farouji et al. (1398) examined the causes and factors leading to the Islamic Revolution in Iran from the perspective of Pahlavi government officials, highlighting various political, administrative, economic, and foreign factors as influential in the Islamic Revolution.
- Ali Morshedizad and Saleh Zamani (1394) elucidated the structural causes of the government's collapse, exploring the nature of the authoritarian government, the rentier nature of the Shah Regime, and U.S and external pressures, linking these hypotheses to the structural collapse of the Pahlavi regime.
- Ashraf Pahlavi (1375), in the book "My Brother and I," delved into the memoirs and background of the fall of the Pahlavi regime, referencing corruption in the second Pahlavi government as a contributing factor to the Islamic Revolution.

### **Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory**

- Masoud Ghaffari and Mohammad Radmard (1396), focused on institutionalization in development and the reasons for the fall of the Pahlavi system, attributing the lack of a national plan and the sustained oppression (suppression of civil and participatory institutions) as the primary cause of the second Pahlavi regime's collapse.
- Omid Shokraneh Avzanaqi and Masoud Akhavan Kazemi (1400) explored the role of legitimacy crisis in the fall of the second Pahlavi regime, citing authoritarian structure, struggle against Iranian-Islamic culture, foreign interference and lack of independence, suppression, lack of political participation by the people, and rentier nature of the government as reasons leading to a legitimacy crisis and eventual downfall.
- Javad Biglari and Mohammad Abolfathi (1401) investigated the reasons for the fall of the Pahlavi regime from a political sociology perspective, emphasizing an elite-centric viewpoint.
- Farideh Mohammadalipour and Sayyid Reza Rahimi Emad (1392) analyzed the reasons for the formation of the Iranian Islamic Revolution and the theory of good governance, focusing on the second Pahlavi government from 1332 to 1357, introducing political corruption, political instability, and political participation against the ruling system as among the most significant reasons for the regime's collapse.

Amir Hossein Nabati (1401), "Development and Fall of the Second Pahlavi Government: An examination of the Fifth Economic Development Plan Based on Documents;" the results of this article introduce the increase in oil prices and the subsequent increase in liquidity as the cause of the breakdown of the regime's economic structure. According to this article, the increase in liquidity led to an increase in domestic demand. The country's economic inefficiency, increased inflation leading to a loss of resources, and the lack of proportionate modernization with society all contributed to the downfall of the Pahlavi regime.

Ali Baqeri Dolatabadi (1394), "The Impact of Mohammad Reza Shah's Military Actions on the Occurrence of the Iranian Islamic Revolution;" the findings of this article indicate that Shah's military actions and the interdependence of these two entities (Shah and the military) led to forming the parallel information-security institutions and the military's disloyalty to the Shah and the regime resulted in the collapse of Pahlavi.

Ali Mohammad Hazeri and Mohammad Fekri (1395), "The Oil King: Oil and the Fall of Pahlavi;" oil crises and instability in the Shah's regime led to its downfall.

Mostafa Malakutian (1389), "Ideology and Leadership and Its Influence on the Rapid Victory and Global Reception of the Iranian Islamic Revolution;" the findings of the article suggest that the revolutionary ideology and the leadership presence of Imam Khomeini were among the most significant reasons for the success of the revolution and the downfall of Pahlavi.

The results and findings reviewed in the research background indicate that the cause and reasons for the collapse of the Pahlavi regime in most studies focus on internal Pahlavi factors and attribute it to the lack of the Shah's political will, economic-oil crises, the military's severed ties with the regime, and overall inefficiency of the Shah and the associated regime. However, the precise and reassuring findings regarding the cause and reasons for the downfall of Pahlavi are not presented comprehensively, and it does not appear to be comprehensive.

Therefore, in addition to the significant factors in the downfall of Pahlavi, the nature of the revolutionary movement, the power of Imam Khomeini's leadership, the ideals of the Islamic Revolution, and the power of mobilization and the prominence of culture and religion should all be considered as the most important reasons and causes of the fall of Pahlavi alongside the aforementioned factors. With this in mind, based on the conducted survey, an independent article with a new perspective and comprehensive angle that identifies and explains all influential factors in the downfall of Pahlavi has not been conducted. This article aims to address this issue by relying on the theory of the "Destabilizing State."

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In examining the nature of governments, weak and failing governments are applied to political systems that do not have the ability to manage their society and are unable to dominate the country and govern it. Political systems that are weak in the management of a country's political and social governance are referred to theoretically as failing governments. Governments that are weak and face challenges politically, socially, and economically will lose their legitimacy and collapse. In presenting the theoretical framework of failing governments, three major political, social, and economic components are considered, and under these three major components, there are 12 important indicators that are essential characteristics of failing governments (Rotberg, 2003: 7; Christopher, 1997: 94). Although in various research and studies conducted by researchers, the nature and theoretical components of weak, collapsed, failed, and failing governments are sometimes considered as the same and synonymous, and in some other research, each one has been examined separately and distinctly. Weak governments have historical backgrounds

### **Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory**

and fundamental weaknesses, and collapsed governments are those that have experienced power vacuum or downfall. Failing and collapsing governments have different natures compared to weak and collapsed governments.

Failing and collapsing governments have been studied as similar in most researches and with common components. Here, regardless of common or distinct approaches in the theory of failing and collapsing governments, the theory of the "Destabilizing State" has been adopted as the theoretical framework of this research. In this article, the scientific rules and standards presented in the aforementioned theory have been used as the theoretical framework to evaluate and analyze the role of variables involved in the downfall of the Second Pahlavi government. The theory of the Destabilizing State at a macro level considers three main components of political, social, and economic factors in government destabilization.

The political factor includes six main indicators such as; criminalizing the government and undermining its legitimacy (inability to provide basic goods to its residents), rapid decline in providing public and welfare services, arbitrary suspension or application of law and perpetuation of violence against human rights and neglecting people's rights, presence of security forces and their actions as a state within a state (emergence of a new security apparatus), emergence of elites for divisive purposes (sectarian elites), and ultimately intervention of other governments and foreign political actors are among the most crucial indicators of the political factor. The social factor includes four main indicators including; increase in population pressure (escalating population pressure), widespread flow of refugees and internal displacement along with the emergence of emergency situations (extensive human migration), presence of revengeful groups or fear-inducing groups for reprisal, and ultimately the continuous and stable escape of individuals are among the most crucial indicators of the social component.

In the economic factor, the rise of non-credible groups and rapid and severe economic decline (economic downturn) and the presence of corruption are among the most significant factors (Zartman, 1995: 5; Grimm et al, 2014: 198).

After a general overview of the major components of the Failing State theory (in the political, social, and economic spheres), concerning the indicators extracted from the Destabilizing State theory, each of these indicators has been examined and compared.

Alongside the extracted indicators, Torres and Anderson have classified indicators in the realm of government fragility or government capacities in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, development, and poverty

reduction. According to the theory by Torres and Anderson, the capacities of development and effectiveness of a government include; the bases of power, the capacity and efficiency of bureaucracy (administrative system), the efficiency and dynamism of the economy, and ultimately the presence of political power and its effective implementation. If a government lacks these capacities or faces weakness and crisis in any of them, losing their function and main attribute eventually leads the government to lose its capacity and its effectiveness and efficiency will be disrupted.

According to Torres and Anderson, alongside all mentioned characteristics, political will and poverty reduction must be at the forefront of the government. To be more precise, if a government loses its will and faces poverty, it will be in a fragile state (Torres Anderson, 2004: 21).

It is worth mentioning that the Destabilizing State theory has both the capacity and significance in exploring and explaining the fall of the Pahlavi regime and the emergence of the Islamic Revolution. Theories and theoretical approaches are attempts to explain the causes and factors behind the emergence of a phenomenon in society. In this context, the mentioned theory reveals new dimensions and aspects of the event in explaining, analyzing, and assessing the fall of the Pahlavi regime. Although the theory in question has fundamental shortcomings regarding the Iranian Islamic Revolution due to not covering all the reasons and factors (cultural - values) involved in the fall of the Pahlavi regime and the victory of the Islamic Revolution accurately, its application highlights a new aspect of the issue.

This article is based on the Destabilizing State theory and the research scope covers the period from 1320 to 1357. In this regard, by using historical sources and providing evidence and examples, the causal variables contributing to the collapse and the reasons for the fall have been addressed.

### **3. Explanation of the Political Factors and the Collapse of the Second Pahlavi**

#### **3.1. Perceiving the Shah as a Criminal and Delegitimizing the Government**

The view of the Second Pahlavi by the people and society was negative, considering it somewhat criminal and illegitimate, resulting in people not having a role or place in the government, which was autocratically run by the Shah and centralized around the person of the Shah (Zahiri, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 41-86).

The decrease in political participation of the people in the era of the Second Pahlavi was due to the failure in political acceptance in society.

### **Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory**

People demanded a minimum for participating in power, politics, and engagement, and as a result of the decrease in political participation, legitimacy was removed from the Pahlavi regime (Amini, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 89; Donya Newspaper, 07/10/1357).

On the other hand, the penetration and presence of the royal family and relatives of the Shah in the political and economic arena challenged the legitimacy of the Shah. Most members of the Shah's family were somehow involved in politics, the economy, smuggling drugs, or drug consumption (Fardoust, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 487).

Especially Farah Pahlavi and Shahram Pahlavinia (son of Ashraf Pahlavi) were professional antiquities smugglers (Deldam, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 995; Espionage Lair Documents, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 809).

This issue, in addition to weakening the will of the royal family, led to the delegitimizing of the Second Pahlavi government in the minds of the people.

#### **3.2. Government's Inability to Provide Public Services**

The decline of public services and lack of welfare in society was regarding the disproportion between people's income and expenses. The administrative bureaucracy and public institutions of the country did not provide sufficient salaries. Iranian youth did not have access to minimal welfare services and adequate benefits to receive public services in society. The increase in housing prices, high inflation, and lack of access to welfare facilities were significant issues during that period (Katuziyan, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 19).

The most vital historical period of the rapid decline of public services was after Shahrivar 1320 due to widespread unemployment and poverty, where the country's construction activities and economic infrastructure were halted, and many people were left unemployed. After the government's land reforms, farmers were forced to join companies. Agricultural joint-stock companies were under the control of the security apparatus and forced villagers to join them (Ālikhani, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 45).

As a result, the number of government employees increased, and a significant portion of the government's income went to paying salaries, with no productive, economic, infrastructure, or developmental activities taking place in the country (Akbari, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 65).

The state of public welfare in society was inappropriate at various levels and in various fields. Although some historians have mentioned the approval of rural social security insurance and the establishment of social insurance organizations during the Second Pahlavi period to cover rural residents and their families against work-related accidents, illnesses, unemployment, death, and other issues (Akbari, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 98);



However, social coverage in the field of medical equipment was limited and had inappropriate and unfair distribution. On the other hand, the lower class, workers, especially construction workers, street vendors, employees of small factories, and temporary and seasonal workers were not included in the insurance and social security scheme. The insurance scheme and participation in its profits were limited to the upper-middle class and the middle and lower classes were deprived of the benefits of social welfare and insurance (Abrahamiyan, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 551).

### **3.3. The Imposition of Personality Law and the Increase in Violence in Society**

The suspension or selective application of the law in society and the expansion of violence against people and human rights in the paradoxical/dual behavior of the Second Pahlavi government existed. In addition to the autocratic nature of the Shah, these behaviors were rooted in superiority, humiliation (Fallachi, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 31), and the display of fake bravery and courage (Esfandiari, (n.d.): 63).

The emergence of Democrats in the United States in Iran (1355) also raised the issue of human rights. The idea of human rights by the Shah, quoting Christian Saint, regarding the king, who introduced himself as a guide and teacher of the people (Pahlavi, 1977 AD/1355 SH: 17), was contradictory. As a result, in the era of the Second Pahlavi government, the Shah was the only source of the law and used it at will. By using the law selectively, violence was perpetuated and expanded. Regarding human rights, the Shah had a personal approach and acted selectively and arbitrarily.

The grandeur of the Shah and the selective application of the law had a psychological aspect in the person of the Shah; it has been reported that during a party held by George Walden in honor of Harold Wilson, the former Prime Minister of England, who had arranged it, Wilson praised the Shah of Iran and described him as the greatest leader in the world, which greatly pleased the Shah for Wilson's flattery (Raji, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 61).

These behaviors and perceptions of the Shah were a form of self-deprecation and a sense of inferiority. On the other hand, inside the country, no one could question the Shah's words; everyone was only trying to please the Shah, and as a result, realities were not expressed (Holmes, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 108).

Examples of the increase in violence include executions, imprisonments, and exile of prominent political figures, most of who were removed from the political scene through suppression and isolated them (Wright, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 13).

### **Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory**

The Shah politically exploited and selectively interpreted new concepts of human rights (political participation, democracy, lack of individual concentration in power) (Nejati, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 37). To cover up his wrong actions in the field of violence, the Shah put the main and real issues of human rights on hold by making superficial and ceremonial changes (Matma, 1977 AD/1357: No. 1-5859-7 A), not following the law. For example, replacing Jamshid Amouzegar with Amir Abbas Hoveida as the Secretary-General of the Rastakhiz Party was a clear example of this (Pahlavi, 1980: 151) and elsewhere, in line with the requirements of the time and through arbitrary legal application, Sharif Emami replaced Amouzegar.

#### **3.4. Establishment of A Broad and Centralized Security Apparatus by the Shah**

During the Pahlavi era, a broad and centralized security apparatus was established. It means that the Shah had centralized power and control over all security apparatuses from the top down. Additionally, the activities of the Shah's security forces seemed to operate as an independent state within the heart of the Shah's government and functioned separately from other institutions. Two organizations; the Imperial Inspection and the Imperial Commission interfered in various affairs in the Second Pahlavi government, and the Shah's purpose in establishing these two centers was for more control (Graham, 1979 AD/1358 SH: 171).

The emergence of SAVAK was one of the vital examples of this. SAVAK was considered as a concrete example of a security force at the domestic and international levels. SAVAK was established with the assistance of the CIA, FBI, and Mossad. SAVAK had power at the overall level of Iran's political system in ensuring domestic security and intervened in the affairs of other institutions and military and non-military organizations.

To guarantee security outside of Iran, SAVAK also paid attention, and the counterintelligence program of the country's intelligence and security organization was carried out to prevent penetration and the spread of communism.

#### **3.5. Gap between Elites and the Shah**

The emergence of elites and fragmentation in the Second Pahlavi government had occurred in a different way. The elites of the era of the Second Pahlavi had no role or place in society. With the increase in the Shah's power, the power of the elites was diminished. As a result, the Shah's individual decision-making in all matters with the presence and existence of elites in society led to distrust and caused a kind of elite fragmentation and separation from the people (Fardoust, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 98).

The centralized and Shah-oriented command structure had created a situation where criticizing the Shah was prohibited and expressing real and personal opinions was dangerous (Ling, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 4).

Individuals in the Pahlavi regime, despite the Shah's power at the helm, were passive and had no power in decision-making, and on the other hand, with the absence of the Shah, which occurred on Dey 26, 1357, they became discouraged and disheartened. That is, they became inactive and had no decision-making power (Tufaniyan, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 89) and the post-Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi government experienced a kind of disintegration.

With the Shah's escape from Iran, in addition to the existence of fragmentation in cases such as desertions, soldier defections, the declaration of neutrality by the army (Qarahbaghi, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 96), and the covenant with the Imam and solidarity with the revolutionaries showed that the government was in a fragile state. As a result, the gap was not between the elites among the people and among themselves, but rather directed towards the Pahlavi government and the struggle against the ruling regime.

### **3.6. Foreign Powers' Interference in the Country's Internal Affairs**

The interference of European and American governments in the political and social affairs of the Second Pahlavi government was evident. George Ball, the US Deputy Secretary of State, expressed Iran's presence and intervention in the following way: "After the coup on Mordad 28, 1332, until the early 50s, the Shah was under the control and supervision of America, and military matters and armament needs were determined and sent to Iran through the United States." (Rubin, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 164)

Foreign interventions and the presence of various players had turned the country into a destabilizing state. The intervention of other governments was not limited to Iran but, through Iran, America also intervened in other countries.

For example, the Second Pahlavi government, as a representative of America in the region, supported the monarchists in the civil war between the monarchists and republicans in Yemen by sending weapons and military equipment according to America's judgment. In the mass struggles in the Dhofar province in southern Oman, the Shah of Iran assisted the Sultan of Oman and dispatched Chechen military forces. Actions like these were carried out in Pakistan, Iraq, Morocco, Jordan, and some others according to America's decision and through the Second Pahlavi government (Halliday, 1979 AD/1358 SH: 281).

One of the most prominent characteristics of the government was the lack of a proper understanding and alignment with the realities of society at that time. Without foreign interference and especially without

### **Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory**

America's presence and support, things would not have progressed; ignoring society's norms and national cohesive elements, which were the roots of intensifying the Pahlavi regime's dependence on foreign powers, especially America (Fardoust, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 487).

In addition to this, the Second Pahlavi government had assigned the region's gendarmerie role to itself and ensured America's interests by establishing security and peace in the region. On the other hand, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi admitted America's supportive role in his government and it has been reported that if America withdraws its military support, the Shah will have no guarantee or responsibility for the country's independence.

Although this message was exchanged in a telephone conversation between the Shah and Hussein Alā, the then Iranian Ambassador to America (Ghani, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 91), in another context, Kissinger stated America's interference in Iranian affairs in the following way: All major international issues were part of the interaction process between Iran and America (Bill, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 279).

With this description, the Second Pahlavi government was determined in its receipt of support and backing from the United States (Vance and Brzezinski, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 117-119).

As a result, withdrawing its support from the Pahlavi government led to a defeat. In terms of the political system of the Second Pahlavi government, it was nostalgic and considered the historical background of the Achaemenid kings as the past government and recognized its monarchy as a continuation of the great Cyrus the Great of Achaemenid era (Suren, 1999: 42). On the other hand, it portrayed its governance model and political system as Western and following the framework and structure of Europe (Karanjia, 1977: 31).

Consequently, this kind of thinking and behavior led to sidelining religion and the clergy and scholars of Islam, who were promoters of religious values; they did not have a minimal role and power in politics and the Pahlavi government (Naraghi, 1994: 114).

Therefore, Shah's nostalgia and ignoring the historical background of other ethnicities, attacking religion and values, Westernizing Iran, the incompatibility of Iranian society and the masses with what the Shah pursued; laid the groundwork for its downfall.

## **4. Explanation of Social Factors and the Collapse of the Second Pahlavi**

### **4.1. Population Pressure**

An increase in population pressure in Iran during the Pahlavi era occurred in a period close to three decades. Considering the supply of food and

healthcare control, the population of Iran during the period under study underwent changes and increased; with a decrease in mortality rates after the year 1320 resulting in a decrease in the death rate. In the two decades leading up to 1345, the birth rate increased from 40 thousand to 48.5 thousand; population of Iran increased by about 83% during this period, from 14.2 million to over 25 million. So, the increase in Iran's population during the Second Pahlavi era from 1350 to 1356 involved various measures at different stages and with health measures to prevent fertility in women of fertile age, which aimed to reduce population growth and the resulting pressure (Amani, 1995 AD/1374 SH: 78).

Although in the years leading up to the Islamic Revolution, the population growth had followed a decreasing trend; however, the Second Pahlavi government has experienced population pressure and its resulting effects. The urban population of Iran in 1335 was about 4.31%, just five years before land reforms. After three years of land reforms, the urban population of Iran had increased to about 40%. In the early days of the Islamic Revolution in 1357, the urban population of Iran reached 48%, leading to an imbalance in the population between rural and urban areas (Abadian, 2018 AD/1397 SH: 5).

#### **4.2. Population Displacement and Human Migration**

During the Second Pahlavi government, the situation of the country in terms of population and emigration from Tehran and cities to outside the country was close to 50%, with over 50% of population displacement from one city to another within the country and from villages to Tehran recorded. Severe population displacement from various rural areas and villages in Iran to urban centers, especially Tehran, had a significant increase during the last ten years of the Second Pahlavi government, reaching over 50% by the end of the government (Eisavi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 65).

The internal displacement of people within the country, along with the emergence of emergency/crisis situations and migration resulting from unemployment and poverty, existed during the Second Pahlavi government.

Wide-ranging measures were taken to reduce political and social freedoms during this period. Following the implementation of the land reforms law, changes occurred in the social and economic structure of villages (Hogland, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 82).

The decrease in the power and influence of large landowners and the expansion of the government's influence in villages led to forming a marginalized class, exacerbating the migration and displacement of villagers and small towns. These changes and displacements created a

### **Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory**

kind of conflict between large landowners and villagers, leading to a state of emergency and crisis in the country.

#### **4.3. The Determination of Revolutionary Groups**

The presence of decisive revolutionary groups and popular groups (the grassroots) that instilled fear and terror in the heart of the Shah, violence, and the illegitimacy of the political system during the Pahlavi era existed; although the historical acceleration and speed of the Islamic movement and the beginning of the collapse of the Pahlavi regime have been recorded by historians and writers in various periods and in different ways. Legitimacy removal from the Second Pahlavi government took a peak and wide scope when Ettela'at newspaper published a derogatory article about Imam Khomeini on 17/10/1356. The decision to change the despotic and puppet regime took form regarding the fear and terror in the heart of the Shah as a result of the insult published by Ettela'at newspaper with an article written by Ahmad Rashidi, who used a pseudonym, shaping the situation.

As a result of the publication of insulting articles and events on Dey 19, 1356, and Bahman 29, 1356, respectively in Qom and Tabriz, the Pahlavi government was faced with fear and terror. In this regard, the religious disputes between the people and the Pahlavi government played the crucial role in shaping the revolution (Fischer, 1980: 21- 97). In addition to various groups among the revolutionary groups, the actions and political activities of the Cherk groups and their political and armed struggles had instilled fear for government (Ivanov, 1977 AD/1356 SH; Alavi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 78).

The Shah's goal in confronting the clerics was to reduce the power of the clerics and the role of religion, which is why he called them a black reaction (Diba, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 312). As a result of the created fear, the government took various actions, one of the vital being the resignation of Jamshid Amouzegar on Mordad 29, 1357, and his replacement by Jafar Sharif Imami (Nejati, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 83).

Sharif Imami accepted responsibility on the condition that the Shah would leave his hand in his affairs and decisions (Parsons, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 110); previously, Sharif Imami presided over the Senate because of the importance of the issue and the Shah's interference, the resignation of Amouzegar and the replacement of Sharif Imami were carried out. The appointment of Jafar Sharif Imami as prime minister did not improve the critical conditions in the country. Sharif Imami's notoriety in society, his connections with economic and financial corrupters, as well as his alleged association with Freemasons, led to the end of his premiership (Thabeti, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 441).

With the formation of widespread street demonstrations in the first half of 1357 coinciding with Eid al-Fitr and the event of Jaleh Square (Martyrs), known as Black Friday/Bloody Friday, in which more than 200 people were killed (Ettela'at Newspaper, 18/06/1357), protests against the Pahlavi government continued in various cities as people sought revenge. On Aban 13, 1357, known as Student Day (the massacre of Tehran University), the protests of the people in Tehran turned into clashes between the armed forces of the regime, reaching its peak during the month of Moharram when on Azar 19 and 20, the revolutionaries rose (Parsons, 1984: 94; Savak Documents, vol. 11, 2011 AD/1381 SH: 44; Marasan, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 228, *ibid.*, 12085: 96).

The Second Pahlavi government declared the government as illegitimate and null and voids (Ettela'at newspaper, 2537, 15691: 4). At that time, with the fear and terror that had arisen in the heart of the Shah and no hope of maintaining power, an attempt was made to form a coalition government. The coalition government envisioned by the Shah had its own laws and conditions that in a way preserved the Shah's position even in his absence (Bakhtiar, 1982 AD/1361 SH: 160).

In this situation, the Shah left Iran, and as a result of the government's weakness and the existence of fear and terror in the coalition government, as well as the person of Bakhtiar and the lack of acceptance from it, and considering the government as illegitimate, the people's revenge shifted from confrontation with the Shah to confrontation with Bakhtiar and the occupation of military centers. Eventually, on Bahman 22, 1357, the revolution prevailed.

The pressure from the people's forces forced all military centers, the Imperial Guard, and the royal Special Forces to retreat, and afterwards, the Voice and Vision organization and other institutions came under the control of the revolutionaries.

## **5. Explanation of Economic Factors and the Collapse of the Second Pahlavi**

### **5.1. Unbalanced Economic Development**

The development of an unbalanced economy by various groups and, as a result, the economy's lack of reliance on the people, financial corruption, and rapid economic growth are among the vital indicators of the breaking state theory. The development of an unbalanced economy had its roots in rentier economy and despotic system which, in the first ten years of the Second Pahlavi government, the income from oil revenues was about \$15 million, which had increased to \$45 million by just prior to the coup d'état on Mordad 28, 1332 (Skocpol, 1982: 4-18).

### **Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory**

The peak of government oil income from oil sales in 1352 had increased to about \$5.6 billion, despite a decrease in daily oil production, government revenue continued to be high; in other words, the overall share of Iran's oil revenue during the period under review increased from 11% in 1332 to 86% in 1353 (Razzaqi, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 127).

As a result, the development of an unbalanced economy benefited certain groups while the government had no interest in engaging with the people, therefore, it did not increase taxes. The increase in oil revenues, considering the unreasonable and hasty actions resulting from oil windfalls, did not lead to economic development in society; instead, it created unbalanced development in the economy. The increase in oil prices and hence the increase in the income of the Second Pahlavi government on one hand led to unbalanced economic development and on the other hand added to the Shah's autocracy and weakened social forces (Mahdavy, 1970: 34).

Regarding the Shah's independence from the people, with the increase in oil revenues, the government easily imposed its values on society and behaved with despotism and extreme violence (Katouzian, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 189).

Increase in oil revenues had created financial corruption, bribery, and the spread of rentier spirit within the government (Zonnis, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 130). Widespread corruption led to an increase in the income of ministers and generals, providing a favorable opportunity for enrichment for those close to the Shah.

This situation not only caused financial corruptions but also created a deep gap between the people and those around the Shah, the royal family, relatives, and groups close to the Shah, putting the government in a breaking state because ordinary people, meaning the masses of the nation, were alienated from the country's leaders. Furthermore, after land reforms, the pattern of subsistence agriculture and self-sufficiency collapsed, the traditional mode of production shifted to modern production methods, leading to the collapse of the traditional economic foundation (Brezhinski, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 17).

#### **5.2. Corruption and the Rapid Decline of the Economy**

The Shah and his wife, the Shah's family, and his children had deposited millions of dollars into their personal accounts abroad and had accumulated significant wealth. This not only did not foster development but; it led to corruption in the government and division in society. Hence, no changes were made in poverty and inequality in the community (Gazyourooski, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 199).

The important issue is that, during the increase in oil revenues, all people did not benefit equally, and the wealthy classes benefited more



than the middle and lower classes, and central areas benefited more than peripheral and marginal regions from this growth (Abrahamiyan, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 552). For example, in the industrial sector, the largest industrial partners were among the close associates of the Shah or individuals with high influence in the government, and other entrepreneurs and industrial pioneers without connections to the government could not undertake industrial projects (Milani, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 127-128).

The policy of rapid and accelerated economic development in Iran in the 50s was not correct, and the Second Pahlavi was oblivious to continuous development and relied solely on intermittent oil revenues. The high income from oil sales during that short period was not utilized in investment and economic infrastructure. The only result of the increase in income of the Second Pahlavi government considering the peak in oil prices created temporary and false prosperity in the government. In fact, the economic revolution of 1352 in the Second Pahlavi government was rapid and accelerated, which declined at the same speed (Jizkardastan, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 90).

Sudden drop in oil prices as a result of the government's reduced income, reclaimed opportunities and privileges from the government (Smith, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 57) and only led to financial corruption and deepening dependence on the US (Milani, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 127). Government structures were destroyed and trust diminished, causing the government to distance itself from the people by attacking societal values (Ettela'at Newspaper, 1978 AD/1357 SH: No. 15696: 1; Yavari, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 97).

In addition to the factors and components mentioned above, the most significant weakness of the state-breakdown theory is the lack of attention to the role of ideology, leadership of the Islamic Revolution, and cultural and religious nature. Cultural and religious factors played a crucial role in the fall of Pahlavi, particularly in the formation and victory of the Islamic Revolution. The core and discourse of the Islamic Revolution consider the right to sovereignty as divine (Malakoutian, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 69).

The Iranian Islamic Revolution, in addition to its ideological and cultural nature, has produced a new theory in the realm of revolutions and has become a model for post-revolutionary movements in the Islamic and religious sphere. The significant role of cultural and religious factors in the Iranian Revolution has not only been highlighted by non-Iranian and non-Muslim researchers but also remains relevant in their research. It is believed that the "Proof of the emergence of religion as a significant political force" was evident in the Iranian Revolution. By blending divine

### **Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory**

rule with the power of the masses based on righteousness, they create a different type of revolution (Stempel, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 435).

According to Theda Skocpol, this revolution was created within Iran and exported to other regions and countries. The transcendence of this revolution caused the Islamic Revolution to not only transform the values and traditions prevailing in its internal relations but also, regarding the presentation of new ideological principles and values, had a profound impact on the foundations and value system governing international relations (Skocpol, 1998 AD/1377 SH, 286).

Michel Foucault believes that the Iranian Revolution introduced the element of religion and the Islamic school into the equations, transactions, and interactions of the international system (Foucault, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 64).

The Iranian Islamic Revolution, relying on the components of religion, social power, and anti-imperialism, emerged from within society. This revolution, at the same time, embodied religious, cultural, social, and political components. The multifaceted nature of the Iranian Revolution allows movements outside this country to engage with it according to its nature and draw the necessary patterns from it.

According to Nikki Keddie, the Iranian Revolution proved to everyone that ideology, culture, and religion played a primary role in the Iranian Revolution and is considered its essence (Keddie, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 177).

Marvin Zonis believes that "Cultural and religious transformation" (Zonis, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 70) has played a significant role in the fall of the Pahlavi regime and the victory of the Iranian Revolution.

According to a survey conducted in 1378 regarding the reasons and motivations for the Iranian Islamic Revolution, at three levels, the reasons were (cultural, Islamic, and religious 37.8%), (political and social 32.5%), and (economic 15.2%) (Mansouri, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 104).

Based on another study conducted in 1389, the nature of the Iranian Revolution has shown cultural, political, and economic aspects, respectively (Panahi, 2012 AD/1391 SH: 320).

The essence of religious teachings in the revolution was that the will of the oppressed will ultimately lead them to leadership of the world (Kelly and Marfleet, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 123). Leili Echghi believes that the crucial reason for the emergence of the revolution, in addition to leadership, was the presence of spirituality and religion (Echghi, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 46).

Considering the historical background of Iranian culture based on Shia Islam, the possibility of mobilizing the masses was provided. The Pahlavi regime and the Shah were attempting to de-Islamize, and the

Iranian Revolution was, in fact, a response to these actions (Amid Zanjani, 1988 AD/1367 SH: 527).

All these cultural and moral approaches regarding the Iranian Revolution have become apparent.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the evidence presented regarding the historical developments of the second Pahlavi government in the political, social, and economic fields, it can be understood that various factors and variables were involved in the collapse of the government. The present study aimed to analyze the role of the variables involved in the collapse of the said government. The research findings based on historical evidence and data, along with what was expressed within the framework of the theory of state breakdown, were utilized to explicate the causes of the collapse and identify and analyze the variables.

The downfall of the second Pahlavi government occurred considering the complementary role of internal factors in the political, social, and economic spheres as well as external interventions (the assumption of Shah's hand in meddling).

The most crucial indications in the political dimension involved in the collapse were the illegitimacy of the second Pahlavi government, inefficiency in service delivery, law evasion accompanied by suppression and violence, infiltration of SAVAK security forces into the government, the gap between the elite and the government, identification of external actors and foreign powers intervening and being recognized as influential in the collapse of the second Pahlavi government.

In the social dimension, factors such as population pressure, internal and external displacement, migration from rural areas to urban areas, migration from small cities to large and metropolitan cities, the existence of revengeful groups against the second Pahlavi government, and instilling fear and terror in the heart of the Shah were among the most identified factors in this section.

Economically, non-augmented economic development, sudden increase in income from oil sales, sharp increase in government income in 1352 and its severe decline in the years 56 and 57, creating a rift between social groups, capital transfer abroad by the royal dynasty and court families, and corruption within the Pahlavi government influenced by the oil price hike were the most significant economic factors.

As a result, the concentration of power in the hands of the Shah and American interventions in political, social, and economic affairs had placed the second Pahlavi government in a vulnerable situation. With the

### Exploration of the Reasons for the Collapse of Pahlavi II Government (1320-1357 SH): An Analysis from the Perspective of the Destabilizing State Theory

decrease in oil prices, the emergence of anti-government uprisings, negative and positive interventions by foreign governments, defiance against the Pahlavi government, declaration of solidarity between the people and the army with the revolutionaries and the leader of the Islamic revolution, strikes by employees, companies, and multiple strikes, the escape of cadre members and soldiers from barracks due to the Shah's arrogance and the expansion of security apparatus and administrative dominance over society led to their emergence and the collapse of the second Pahlavi government.

It is worth mentioning that the Iranian revolution has a cultural-religious nature. Therefore, revolutions based on human nature and divine worldview are less analyzable in this framework because less attention has been paid to other non-material aspects of the revolution. In the cultural and religious sphere, the second Pahlavi government sought to promote official culture by suppressing traditional religious beliefs and attacking internal beliefs, norms, and traditional values of the society. In addition, unequal distribution and impoverishment of farmers and villagers, as well as the government's lack of compatibility with Iranian society, caused a division in beliefs and values, ultimately delivering the final blow to the collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty.

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